

# Sprints: From Ideation to Impact

Presentation at NORDP: 2019

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# What is a Sprint?

A sprint is a designed and facilitated experience that catalyzes teams, using the power of divergent and convergent thinking, to uncover new innovative ideas and approaches to their work, to achieve a shared vision for their work and its opportunity to address societal challenges.



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# Or according to Mats Ljungman...

Usually, the grant writing process all takes place within the constraints of your own skull but here we will let loose the gray matter to see what magic happens! ~Mats



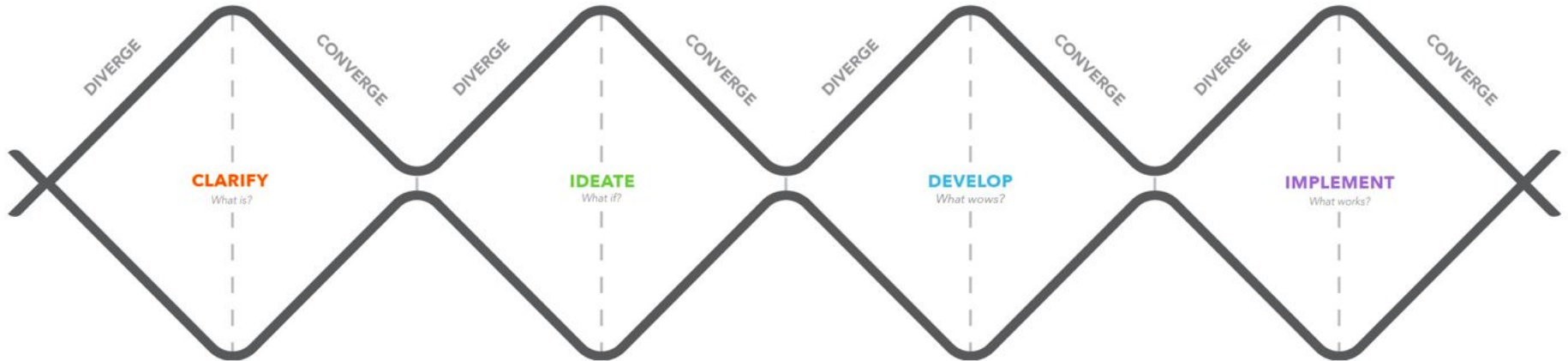
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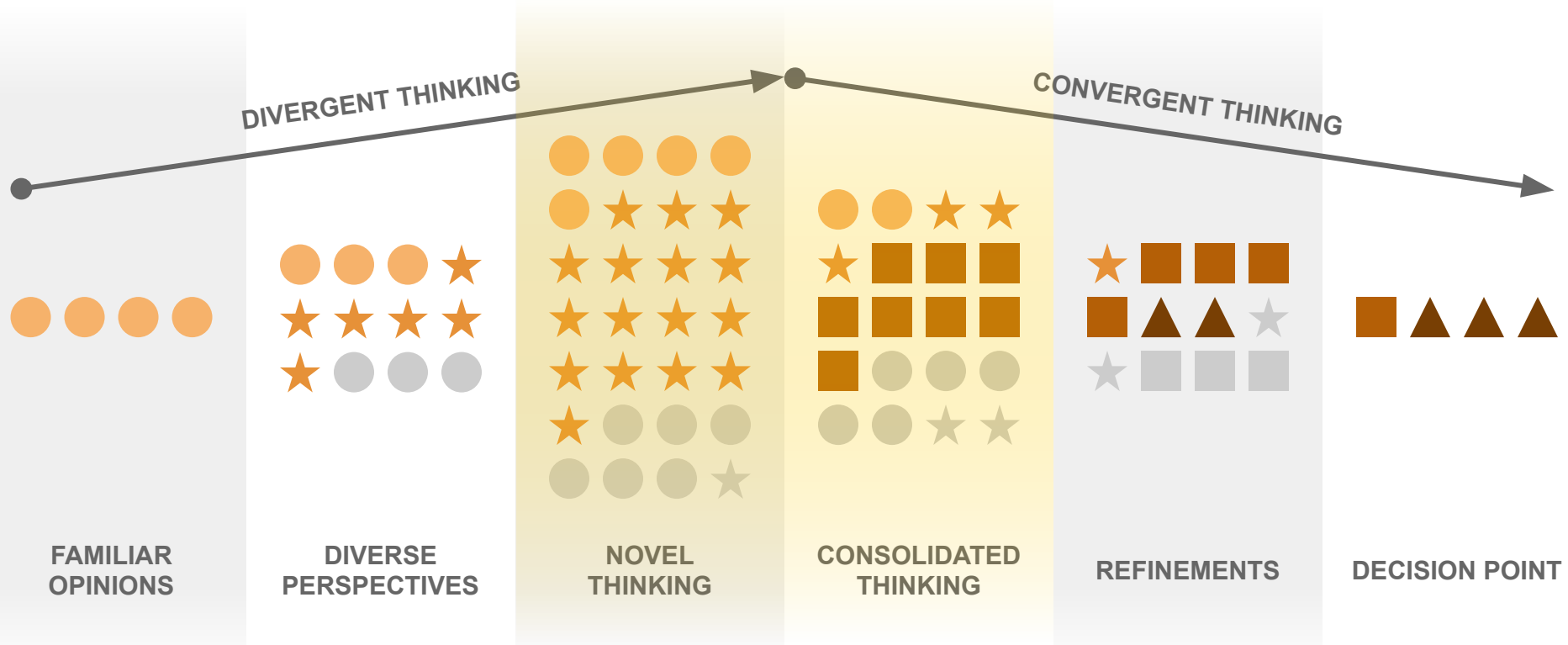
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# Creative Problem Solving Method



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KEY:     OBVIOUS IDEA/INFO     WILD IDEA/INFO     REFINED IDEA/INFO     MORE REFINED IDEA/INFO     NON-CRITICAL IDEA/INFO



# The Basic Framework

## DAY 1 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE



### INTRODUCTION

15 min

- + Introduce participants in the room
- + Describe roles of the Facilitator and Decider
- + Explain the goal of the sprint and the overall agenda



### DESCRIPTION PROPOSAL VISION

20 min

- + Mini-Interviews with PIs to share vision for the project.
- + Listening prompts (Innovation, Significance, Concerns, etc.)



### MODIFYING THE SPECIFIC AIMS

40 min

- + Modify the Project Vision



### WHY MIGHT WE FAIL?

30 min

- + Participants document the reasons why the grant might not be funded

### BREAK

15 min



### COLLABORATIVE OUTLINE SESSION

135 min

- + Group will generate content for proposal sections

## Note

- + Create the Space
- + Role of the Facilitators
  - + Asking Permission
  - + Time Keeper
  - + Pairs (always)
- + Create Listening Prompts
- + Create Space to Include Voices of Stakeholders
- + Create a Plan for Day 2
- + Customize!!



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# The Basic Framework

## DAY 2 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

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### DRAFT SESSION 1

45 min

- + Participants draft corresponding components of the proposal.



### DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

15 min

- + Discuss questions generated during Draft Session 1



### REVISE SESSION 1

30 min

- + Rotate participants to revise Draft Session 1 components

### BREAK

15 min



### DRAFT SESSION 2

45 min

- + Participants draft corresponding components of the proposal.



### DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

15 min

- + Discuss questions generated during Draft Session 2



### REVISE SESSION 2

30 min

- + Rotate participants to revise Draft Session 1 components



### CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

15 min

- + Review outstanding gaps for the proposal and assign who is responsible
- + Determine next steps for continued revisions and submission

## Note

- + Use Google Docs
- + Create Proposal Sections in Advance
- + Utilize “Comments” as parking lot for questions/concerns while writing
- + Create Space conducive to writing
- + Keep it moving
- + Make people TAKE A BREAK!!



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# The Sprint's Six Core Principles

## 1 *Everyone contributes*

Information flow is often limited among team members when investigators write grants. The Grant Sprint provides a **platform for everyone to contribute**. During the **divergent phase**, all participants should contribute their ideas and perspectives. During the **convergent phase**, all participants should vocalize their questions and concerns.

## 2 *Everyone is respectful*

While the old adage of “There’s no such thing as a bad idea” may sound trite, the Grant Sprint intentionally **separates the process of creating and evaluating ideas**. During the **divergent** phase, participants should defer judgement. Judging an idea too quickly will make it impossible to generate any novel ideas. During the **convergent** phase, participants should express their concerns about certain ideas, while also being affirmative. That is, look for **what is good about an idea** with the goal of improving it and facilitating learning, rather than judging an idea for the sake of criticism.



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# The Sprint's Six Core Principles

## 3 *Everyone is honest*

The Grant Sprint provides an opportunity to not only look at the positive opportunities of a potential grant, but also why the grant might fail. By looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the grant proposal, the team will be able to create a better proposal altogether. However, this can only be achieved if all participants express their perspectives honestly throughout the process.

## 4 *Build on each others' ideas*

Academics often seek to find fault in ideas. At the same time, initial ideas often seem obvious or familiar. Instead of knocking down ideas, Grant Sprints seek to **push the bounds of the team by building on these ideas**. What is interesting or exciting about an idea? How might the idea be improved? Could you combine the ideas in a unique and novel way? This pattern of thinking will unlock new paths and opportunities for the team.



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# The Sprint's Six Core Principles

## 5 *Keep it short*

The Grant Proposal Sprint is intended to be a democratic forum where all **participants have equal say** in the direction of the grant proposal. To achieve this, participants should be mindful about the length of their comments. **Keep comments to two minutes** to ensure everyone has an opportunity to provide their perspective.

## 6 *Prevent plagiarism*

Because there are many hands on deck during the grant proposal writing process, avoid copying and pasting sections from published work without citing it clearly. Otherwise, there is a risk that it will get lost in the grant proposal without an appropriate reference.



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# Let's Practice

## 1 *I need a volunteer*

Bring a challenge you are experiencing in your work in Research Development (this will be shared out loud)

## 2 *I need a group to act as a 'resource group'*

Your role is to listen. What is standing out about what your colleague is saying.

1. What needs are they expressing?
2. What assets are they describing?
3. What barriers are they facing?
4. Who are their allies?

### **BRAINSTORMING RULES:**

- + One idea at a time AND per Post-it
- + Reserve Judgement
- + Quantity over Quality
- + Build on each other's ideas \_Yes....And...



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# Descriptors

40 unique responses to the question: Describe your grant sprint experience in one word...

- + 38 'positive'
- + 2 'negative'
- uncomfortable, rushed



# Results & Feedback

## HIGH DEGREE OF SATISFACTION

Experience was valuable to me (client)



Experience was valuable for participants



## HIGH POTENTIAL FOR REFERRAL + REPEAT CLIENTS

Recommend to friend/colleague



I would participate again



2.5% No\* \*The 1 person who indicated that they would not participate again was a student participant.



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# Results & Feedback

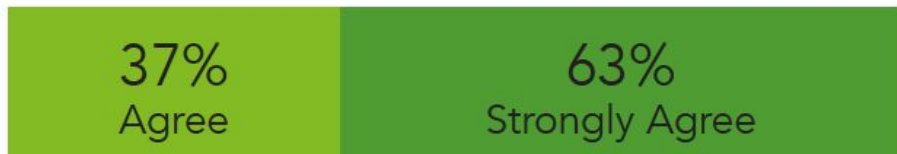
## IMPROVED IDEA GENERATION

Additional ideas were sparked



4% No Response

Improved my group's creativity



## IMPROVED TIME EFFICIENCY

Reduced time burden



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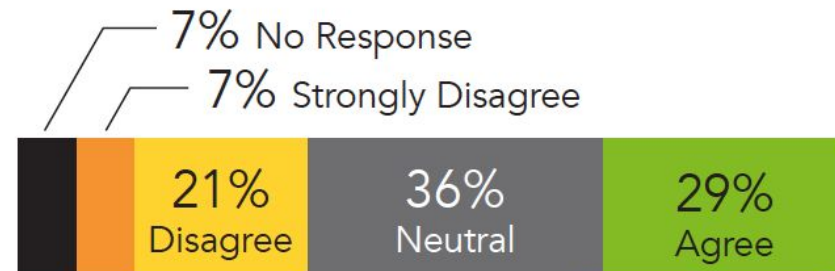
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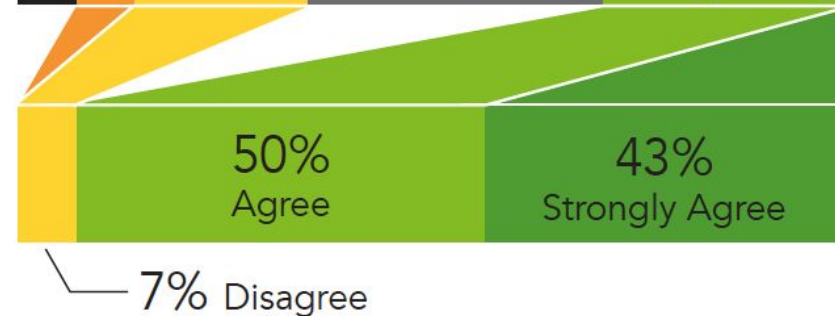
# Results & Feedback

## IMPROVED GRANT WRITING EXPERIENCE

Enjoy typical grant writing process?



Enjoyed grant sprint?



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# Results & Feedback

## KEY THEMES FROM OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS



### Emphasis on Next Steps

There is high value placed on identifying actionable items and developing an action plan.



### More Lead Time is Desired

The process of planning the sprint itself is helpful. More planning time is desired.



### Face-to-Face Matters

- Helped accelerate
  - shared understanding of goals, roles and action plan
  - teambuilding
  - decision making
- Encouraged collaborative brainstorming
- Motivating
- More enjoyable



### More Aftercare is Desired

- Folks want more concrete follow-up
- Post-event synthesis/summary of event is desired
  - Post event follow-up meetings desired as momentum keepers and for accountability



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# Results & Feedback

“ This was highly valuable. All participants contributed. Numerous ideas were hatched and then were systematically categorized, assigned to sub-groups to distill relevant issues. Issues were translated into actions items with associated actors and timelines. This was highly productive.

— *Faculty testimonial*

“ This meeting resulted in the creation of a number of innovative and actionable activities. It is *highly* unlikely that any of these ideas would have been generated without the facilitation provided by ISE.

— *Faculty testimonial*



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To learn more about the sprint model:

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**Invention Report Filed**

# Examples: RNA as the 'glue' + Gliomas

*We want to work together but don't know what our focus is.*



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# Examples: Innovation Salon

*We want our work to be relevant and build relationships with future 'users' of our research*



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# Examples: Global e-Waste Recycling

*We want our work to reach the communities that would benefit from our research*



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## Example: Revisioning a Center

